

Challenges of Human Capacity Development in Federal Universities in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States, Nigeria

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Abstract:

The study investigated the challenges of human capacity development in Universities and the possible strategies for improvement. Three research questions were posed to guide the study. A survey design was adopted and simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 500 lecturers from a population of 1,819 academic staff from two Federal Universities in Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers and was titled “Challenges of Human Capacity Development Questionnaire (CHCDQ)”. The instrument was a 5-point Likert scale. Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument and a reliability coefficient of 0.88 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics – means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages. Results of the study revealed that inadequate funding, corruption/examination malpractice, lack of effective monitoring/supervision of teaching and learning, lack of committed teachers, students’ poor attitude towards learning, inadequate facilities and certificate racketeering were identified as constraints to human capacity development in Universities. Male and female lecturers did not differ in their mean rating of the challenges of human capacity building. In the light of these findings, it was recommended among other things that the government should adequately fund federal Universities in Nigeria to enhance quality human capacity building and lecturers should be given adequate incentives to motivate them to be committed to the training of students for quality outputs.

Key words: Challenges, Human Capacity, Development, University, Education.

1. Introduction

Human capacity development means the art of educating individuals in order to bring out their talents, potentials and innate abilities for the service of the society. The Wikipedia Encyclopedia (2011) states that human capacity building refers to strengthening the skills, knowledge, competencies, and abilities in individual to survive, adapt and thrive in the fast changing world. Human capacity building efforts in tertiary institutions involve teaching and training of students. These provide the students with new skills, knowledge and attitudes for grappling with their jobs on graduation. While Etuk (2004) views human capacity building or manpower development as the process of educating and training people for productive employment role, Ushie (2004) describes it as a process which deals with the development of human competence, skills and attitude for meeting the demands of the nation occupationally, professionally, administratively and technically. Human capacity building is of great importance to any nation. In support of this fact, Alozie (2004) reiterates that a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of her people and use them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else.

Universities are established to fulfill a statutory function of educating and training higher manpower to provide professional, technical and other socio-economic services for the development of the nation. It is against this understanding that the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) in its national policy on education states that, higher education provides the platform for preparing and producing young graduates, such as, engineers, doctors, architects, surveyors, accountants, lawyers, lecturers, and so on, as manpower needs in government, industry and other professions. The Universities are expected to produce graduates who are competent to meet the manpower demands in all sectors of the nation’s economy to enhance effective implementation of national development programmes. In the course of performing this onerous task of human capacity building, the universities in Nigeria are constantly faced with various challenges ranging from poor funding, inadequate facilities, cultism, examination malpractice, certificate racketeering, to poor attitude of students towards learning.

The issue of poor funding of universities in Nigeria has been of major concern to the various stakeholders in the education sector. As rightly pointed out by Omole (2009), it is adequate funding of tertiary education, particularly the university education that would solve other problems in the system as well as other sectors of the economy. It is the universities and other tertiary institutions that are expected to train or build human capacity for service to the larger society. According to Akintoye (2008) and Tilak (2009), inadequate funding of Universities results in poor supply of training materials and infrastructure and the effect shows in lack of materials, facilities and equipment for effective teaching and learning as well as paucity of quality staff. The Federal Government budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria is far below the UNESCO education funding benchmark which stipulates that each developing nation must allocate not less than 26% of its annual budget to the education sector. This impact negatively on the activities relating to human capacity building in universities. Akpan, Ntukidem, Ekpiken and Etor (2009) in their study state that academic programme could be well structured in educational institutions but the delivery method could be poor due to inadequate or lack of essential instructional facilities for effective teaching and learning. Ogu (2008) submits that inadequate infrastructures and poor maintenance of facilities in the Nigerian Universities are seriously affecting effective teaching/learning and research work. Ogu (2008) further states that the traditional source of funding (federal support) has not kept pace with the growing demand for higher education in the country. This is because the imbalance between demand and available resources is aggravated by the increasing cost of higher education, driven by the number of students seeking admission into the universities.

Some university teachers are not committed to their duties and this has adversely affected effective teaching and quality of graduates from the system. Obanya (2010) reports that university teachers should have the requisite aptitude, rather than only the requisite qualifications. Such aptitudes would include broad-based knowledge, lifelong learning skills, capacity for team-work, and capacity for practice-oriented teaching. Thus, a university teacher should be able to manage knowledge and its application in such a way that it would enhance students' learning in their disciplines.

University teachers are expected to be in constant touch with current trends in knowledge to be able to effectively and positively affect students' learning. As rightly observed by Babalola (2008), there is knowledge explosion in the world today, and most university teachers have probably found it difficult to update their course contents because of lack of access to the internet. In support of this, Adekanmbi (2008) states that a sizeable number of staff in African Universities does not have access to the internet. Obanya (2010) and Abama (2009) in their study report that for effective teaching and learning to take place in our universities, there should be among other things, occasional supervision and continuing pedagogical improvement opportunities throughout a lecturer's career in the system.

Recently a new challenge emerged in some universities where teachers are expected to publish in all continents of the world before they are promoted to the ranks of Associate Professor and Professor. This development has its merits and demerits, but it appears that the demerits tend to outweigh the merits. Babalola (2008) cautions that this over-emphasis on publications is at the expense of teaching effectiveness in the Nigerian Universities, as there is the tendency for the teachers to spend more time on activities that will result in their promotions than in teaching/learning activities. The approach to the recruitment of university teachers is another area of problem. People are employed without any input from the relevant departments as to the suitability or otherwise of the candidates. This has resulted in departments having so many newly recruited redundant teachers, leaving the workload on the few existing and willing teachers.

The quality of students admitted into our higher institutions is another area of concern because the quality of students admitted to a large extent determines the quality of outputs (graduates) from the system. Babalola (2008) pointed out that the end results of admitting unqualified students into the universities are the escalating incidences of cultism, indiscipline, corruption, examination malpractice and other fraudulent practices. Since such students would naturally find it very difficult to cope with the rigors of academic work, they seek to console themselves by resorting to other activities like cultism thereby turning the universities, the citadel of learning into centers of violence resulting in destruction of lives and property in the campuses (Rotimi, 2005). Curran & Rosen (2006) report that this group of students are not interested in academic work, do not attend lectures with the hope of resorting to examination malpractices and sorting of grades to pass examinations. These constraints could adversely affect quality human capacity building in our universities for sustainable national development. It is against this background that researchers were motivated to find out the challenges of human capacity development in our universities and to proffer the way forward.

University education aims at raising the productivity of the people by helping to improve their idea, knowledge, attitude, skills, initiative, enterprise and adaptability. It is expected to make the graduate fluid, flexible and very

functional in a competitive world of today. Unfortunately this is not the true situation in our universities. The universities are faced with a plethora of challenges in their efforts to develop human capacity for the nation. Underfunding and subsequent paucity of facilities and poor learning materials still characterize the system. The students are not committed to their studies; hence increase in examination malpractices, cultism and other vices. The battered teachers grappling with “publish or perish” syndrome, un-conducive teaching/learning environment, are no longer motivated to take their teaching duties seriously. At this juncture, it is pertinent to ask the question “what are the challenges of human capacity building in universities?”. This study is poised to provide answer to this question.

2. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to find out the challenges of human capacity development in federal universities in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States of Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined

- i. The challenges of human capacity development in universities.
- ii. Male and female lecturers rating of the challenges of human capacity development in universities.
- iii. The strategies for improving human capacity development in universities.

3. Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

- i. What are the challenges of human capacity development in universities?
- ii. How do male and female lecturers perceive the challenges of human capacity development in universities?
- iii. What are the strategies for improving human capacity development in universities?

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research design

The survey design was adopted for this study. This design was used because the study involved the use of representative sample from a population and the drawing of conclusion based on analysis of data.

4.2 Population

The study covered two universities, University of Uyo in Akwa Ibom State and University of Calabar in Cross River State. The population of the study covered all the academic staff of the two Federal Universities. The total population of academic staff was 1,819 in the two universities. A breakdown of the population showed that university of Calabar had 889 academic staff, while university of Uyo had 930 academic staff.

4.3 Sampling technique and sample

Simple random sampling technique was used to select 270 lecturers from University of Calabar and 230 lecturers from University of Uyo. This gave a total sample size of 500 respondents. The simple random sampling technique was adopted to ensure that each subject had equal and independent chance of being selected.

4.4 Research instrument

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers and was titled “Challenges of Human Capacity Development Questionnaire (CHCDQ)” for lecturers. The instrument was face-validated by an expert in educational research. The instrument consisted of two sections. Section A sought personal data of the respondents such as gender, age, years of teaching experience, qualification and rank/status. Section B consisted of 10 items. Nine of them had 5 response options each, ranging from one to five, where one (1) was the least score and five (5) was the highest score. The respondents were required to rate the challenges of human capacity development in Universities by ticking one of the 5 options against each item. The 10th item was an open ended question which required the respondents to suggest two possible strategies for improving human capacity development in the universities.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, it was trial- tested by administering it to 50 lecturers who were not part of the selected sample. The Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument and a reliability coefficient of 0.88 was obtained. This value was high enough for the instrument to be considered reliable.

4.5 Method of data collection

The instrument was administered to the respondents in their various institutions. Copies of the questionnaire were filled and returned on the spot. All the 500 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and found valid for analysis

4.6 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages) were used for data analysis. An item with a mean rating of 3.00 was regarded as significant, while a mean rating of less than 3.00 was regarded as not significant. The mean score of 3.00 was determined by adding 5+4+3+2+1 and dividing the result by the number of the response scale which was 5.

5. Results

5.1 Research Question 1

What are the challenges of human capacity development in universities?

The answer to this question is presented in Table I

*Insert table I

The data in Table I show that the grand mean of 3.23 is greater than the accepted mean of 3.00 indicating that the items on Table I have been accepted by the respondents as the challenges of human capacity development in universities. However, item-by-item analysis reveals that items 1-7 have mean scores greater than the accepted mean of 3.00 while items 8 and 9 have mean scores less than 3.00 and are therefore not accepted as challenges of human capacity development in universities. The table also reveals that the greatest challenge of human capacity development in universities is inadequate funding with a mean score of 3.88 and it is ranked first, followed by corruption/examination malpractice with a mean score of 3.67. Lack of effective monitoring/supervision of teaching and learning is ranked third position with a mean score of 3.54, while lack of committed teachers is ranked 4th position with a mean score of 3.30. The ranking of the challenges follows in that order with the least being admission procedure which is ranked 9th position with a mean score of 2.26.

5.2 Research Question 2

How do male and female lecturers perceive the challenges of human capacity development in universities?

The answer to this question is presented in Table 2.

*Insert table 2

The data in Table 2 reveal the grand mean score of male lecturers to be 3.16 with a standard deviation of 1.21 while the grand mean score of the female lecturers is 3.27 with a standard deviation of 1.20. These two grand means are greater than the accepted mean score of 3.00. The two grand means suggest that male and female lecturers do not differ in their mean ratings of the challenges of human capacity development in universities. However, item-by-item analysis shows that male and female lecturers differ to some extent in their mean rating of items 6 (inadequate facilities for effective teaching and learning) and 7 (certificate racketeering). The mean score of males for item 6 is 2.59 which is less than the accepted mean of 3.00 and therefore item 6 is not accepted by the male lecturers as a challenge while the female lecturers with a mean score of 3.41 accept it as a challenge of human capacity development. Item 7 with a mean rating of 3.40 is accepted by the male lecturers as a challenge, while the female lecturers with a mean rating of 2.84 do not accept item 7 as a challenge of human capacity development in universities. Table 2 also shows that both male and female lecturers do not differ in their mean ratings of items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9.

5.3 Research Question 3

What are the effective strategies for improving human capacity development in universities?

The answer to this question is presented in Table 3.

*Insert table 3

The data in table 3 are presented in a descending order, that is, from the highest to the least. Table 3 shows that 260(52%) respondents identify adequate funding of universities as a major strategy for improving human capacity development in universities. Sixty-five respondents representing 13% identify stiffer penalties for staff and students who aid and abet examination malpractice, certificate racketeering, and fake admission practices, while 43(8.60%) respondents submit the provision of adequate and quality infrastructural, instructional and research facilities as another strategy for improving human capacity development in the universities.

6. Discussion of Findings

The study shows that respondents rate inadequate funding as the most serious challenge of human capacity development in universities. This particular challenge is a major one because if sufficient finance is not provided adequate quantity and quality human and material resources cannot be procured for use in the development of human capacity needed for the economic development of the country. This finding is supported by the works of Akintoye (2008) and Tilak (2009) who report that inadequate funding of universities result in poor supply of training materials and infrastructures as well as paucity of quality of staff. The finding of this study also reveal that corruption/examination malpractice, lack of effective monitoring/supervision of teaching and learning, lack of committed teachers, students poor attitude towards learning, inadequate facilities for effective teaching/learning and certificate racketeering are rated as other challenges of human capacity development in universities in Nigeria. These findings are not surprising when the prevailing conditions in our universities are considered. The academic

programmes could be well structured, but the delivery method could be poor due to inadequate or lack of essential instructional facilities for effective teaching and learning (Akpan, Ntukidem, Ekpiken and Etor, 2009). Thus, lack of facilities constitutes a factor militating against effective development of human capacity in our universities. Inadequate provision of infrastructures and poor maintenance of existing ones seriously affect effective teaching and learning in Nigerian universities (Ogu, 2008).

Corruption/examination malpractice is identified in this study as a challenge to human capacity development. This could be attributed to the quality of students admitted into the universities. This finding is supported by Babalola (2008) who reports that the end results of admitting unqualified students into the universities are the escalating incidences of cultism, indiscipline and examination malpractices. Thus, the academically deficient student is likely to get involved in examination malpractice in order to get the grade he/she wants. This greatly affects the quality of the out puts (graduates) of the higher institutions in terms of the skills, knowledge, ideas and values they acquired.

Another finding of this study reveals that male and female lecturers do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the challenges of human capacity development in universities. This finding depicts that gender is not an important factor in lecturers' perception of the challenges of human capacity building in the universities. Male and female lecturers are alike in many respects and if both of them learn the same thing they can perceive learnt habit the same way.

The study also shows that respondents have suggested a number of strategies that can be adopted to enhance human capacity development in our universities. It is important to note that the suggested strategies include adequate funding of universities, stiffer penalties for teachers and students who aid and abet examination malpractice and provision of adequate and quality infrastructural, instructional and research facilities. These have been listed as being prominent among others. The issue of inadequate funding of higher institutions in Nigeria has become a serious concern. Proprietors of universities (Federal and State) should as a matter of necessity devote substantial amounts of the national and state budgets to the funding of higher education to enable the institutions provide the required manpower, infrastructural facilities and equipment for teaching, learning and research for the development of human capacity that will add value to the national economy. In support of this fact, Omole (2009) points out that it is adequate funding of tertiary education, particularly the university education that would solve other problems in the system as well as other sectors of the economy.

Conclusion

In the light of the findings of this study, it could be concluded that the major challenge of human capacity building in our universities is inadequate funding, followed by corruption/ examination malpractice. Insufficient funding of universities hinders effective management of universities generally by institutional administrators. Inadequate funding makes it difficult for university administrators to procure and provide needed facilities for quality human capacity development. The prevalent of examination malpractice makes students to develop poor attitude towards learning with the hope that they will manipulate examination grades through "sorting" in their own favor.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that:

Government should realize the importance of the role of universities in human capacity building for sustainable national development and increase the funding of universities substantially. The education funding bench mark stipulated by UNESCO which is that each developing nation must allocate not less than 26% of its annual budget to education sector should be fully implemented in Nigeria.

Teachers and students who are found guilty of corruptions and examination malpractice in universities should be shown the way out. This will help to sanitize the university system. Pre-examination orientation programme should be organized for students, particularly for newly admitted students. In this way students would be exposed to the effect of examination malpractices in their academic pursuits and the punishments associated with them.

Lecturers should be given adequate incentives to motivate them to put in more effort and be committed to the training of the students for quality outputs.

Both the government and management of universities should upgrade learning facilities to meet global standard for effective human capacity development.

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Table I
Lecturers' Rating of the Challenges of Human Capacity Development in Universities (n=500)

Items	\bar{X}	SD	Rank order
1. Inadequate funding	3.88	1.01	1 st
2. Corruption/Examination malpractice	3.67	1.11	2 nd
3. Lack of effective monitoring/supervision of teaching and learning	3.54	1.15	3 rd
4. Lack of committed teachers	3.30	1.20	4 th
5. Students poor attitude towards learning	3.28	1.12	5 th
6. Inadequate facilities for effective teaching/learning	3.27	1.23	6 th
7. Certificate racketeering	3.12	1.30	7 th
8. Teacher's recruitment procedure	2.75	1.57	8 th
9. Admission procedure	2.26	1.66	9 th
Grand Mean	3.23	1.26	

Decision range: Mean score of 3.00 and above is agreed or accepted, while mean score below 3.00 is disagreed or not accepted.

Table 2
Male and Female Lecturers' Rating of the Challenges of Human Capacity Development in Universities (n=500).

S/N	Items	Male (n=300)		Decision	Female (n=200)		Decision
		\bar{X}	SD		\bar{X}	SD	
1.	Inadequate funding	3.80	1.02	Accepted	3.96	1.00	Accepted
2.	Corruption/examination malpractice	3.59	1.25	Accepted	3.75	0.97	Accepted
3.	Lack of effective monitoring/supervision of teaching & learning	3.68	1.13	Accepted	3.56	1.17	Accepted
4.	Lack of committed teachers	3.34	1.10	Accepted	3.36	1.30	Accepted
5.	Students poor attitude towards learning	3.24	1.26	Accepted	3.30	1.20	Accepted
6.	Inadequate facilities for effective teaching and learning	2.59	1.18	Not accepted	3.41	1.02	Accepted
7.	Certificate racketeering	3.40	1.20	Accepted	2.84	1.40	Not accepted
8.	Teachers' recruitment procedure	2.06	1.25	Not accepted	2.56	1.07	Not accepted
9.	Admission procedure	2.80	1.50	Not accepted	2.70	1.64	Not accepted
Grand mean		3.16	1.21		3.27	1.20	

Decision Range: Mean score of 3.00 and above is accepted; while mean score of below 3.00 is not accepted.

Table 3

Respondent's submission of the strategies for improving Human Capacity Development in Universities.

Strategies	No. of Subjects	Percentage
1. Adequate funding of universities	260	52.00
2. Stiffer penalties to staff and students who aid and abet examination malpractice, certificate racketeering, falsification of credentials and fake admission practices.	65	13.00
3. Adequate and quality infrastructural, instructional and research facilities should be provided.	43	8.60
4. Team work should be encouraged among lecturers.	27	5.40
5. Quality service delivery should be ensured.	24	4.80
6. Compulsory ICT training for staff and students to enhance teaching and learning efficiency.	22	4.40
7. Rigorous screening for appointment of lecturers to ensure that qualified persons are appointed based on merit .	18	3.60
8. The government and management of universities should upgrade learning facilities to meet global standard and challenges.	15	3.00
9. Training of staff on emergent issues before introducing innovations so as to improve on the skills and competences of staff.	11	2.20
10. Provision of effective advisement and counseling services for students.	9	1.80
11. A committee for monitoring and supervision of teaching and learning should be instituted in each university.	6	1.20
Total	500	100

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